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SUBJECT: ADVANCING CIVIL SERVICE REFORM IN IRAQ

11. SUMMARY: The Prime Minister is leading a new Civil Service Reform Committee to overhaul federal personnel management in Iraq. The Iraqi Government has requested USG help to make this happen. The goals are to have merit-based appointment and promotion; performance management, grading, and pay systems; human resource management, and new job descriptions and classifications. When enacted, this will professionalize the civil service, improve transparency, while also reducing corruption. END SUMMARY.

BACKGROUND

12. Article 107 of the Iraqi Constitution requires the creation of a Federal Civil Service Commission, which makes civil service reform a key priority for the Government of Iraq (GoI). As a part of this obligation, Iraq made commitments to the international community to overhaul the current civil service system. The goal of this reform is to institute a comprehensive federal civil service based on professionalism, integrity, and non-partisanship; and to lessen the opportunities for corruption and favoritism in government employment.

REQUEST FOR USG HELP

13. The USAID-funded Tatweer project is providing technical assistance with capacity-building to key Iraqi ministries and national institutions. As part of this effort, USAID/Tatweer worked with the Prime Minister's office to establish a high level committee dedicated to this important undertaking. Thamir Abbas Ghabban, Chairman of the Prime Minister's Advisory Commission, stated: "We highly appreciate your project's efforts and support of administrative reform in Iraq."

a. The Prime Minister issued an executive order formally establishing an Inter-Ministerial Civil Service Reform Committee (the Committee) comprised of representatives from the Prime Minister's office, the Ministry of Justice (Shura Council), the Ministry of Planning, and the Ministry of Finance.

b. "There will be no sustainable and lasting reform without a sound civil service reform. Iraq civil service reform has been neglected for decades, but now with USAID's help we are rebuilding a new civil service system on solid ground," said Dr. Ghazi Al-Abudi, Chairman of the Civil Service Reform Committee.

c. The formation of the Committee marks a notable milestone in Iraq's progress toward a new civil service system. The Committee is charged with establishing the Federal Civil Service Commission and is working on a new civil service law in accordance with international best practices in this field.

d. In response to the GoI request, USAID/Tatweer's Civil Service Program will continue supporting the Commission's goals by providing training and expert counsel in the areas of civil service and legislation. Public outreach and education interventions are planned for the near future so various public sectors and the public at large are kept informed about the progress of civil service reform efforts in Iraq.

MEASURABLE PROGRESS

¶4. As an important step toward creating the Federal Civil Service Commission, a draft law was finalized and sent to the Council of Ministers for approval. The Council of Ministers approved the draft and forwarded it to Parliament where it is being debated through a second reading prior to enactment. The Federal Civil Service Commission will be responsible for implementation and development of a professional civil service system based on merit and transparency according to the new legislation at the federal and provincial levels.

ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION

¶5. The Committee is working to introduce merit-based appointments and promotions; performance management, grading, and pay systems; human resource management; and new job descriptions and classifications. Important progress has been realized on this level. Once the draft law is

BAGHDAD 00003081 002 OF 002

finished, the Committee will distribute to all ministries and GoI agencies for review before submission to the Council of Ministers for approval and presentation to Parliament for enactment. When enacted, this will prove to be a major anticorruption and transparency advance for the GoI. The GoI's confidence and trust in the USAID/Tatweer assistance also demonstrates real Iraqi buy-in towards a positive agenda to institutionalize sustainable capacity-building and deter corruption.

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